

TollFreeNumbers.com

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Federal Communications Commission
Ajit Pai, Chairman
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

August 25, 2017

Re: 95-155 - Requesting Public Comment Period regarding the process for deciding 833 numbers set aside during the 833 Opening

Dear Chairman Pai,

On April 21st the FCC shocked the industry by completely reinventing the opening process for a new toll free area code. This certainly wasn't an easy thing to do. Doing what's expected is easy. Creating a whole new way of doing something takes a lot of guts and is much harder. But the right thing is usually harder. Now several months later, the 833 launch went off wonderfully. Every phone company had equal access to good numbers, and had enough capacity for anyone that wanted numbers at the time. The FCC took away the advantage that some companies had by having high speed connections and multiple resporgs. There was no huge land rush and today over 327,000 833 numbers are in use and growing.



Like I said the way that you allocated the initial requests wasn't the easy way, but it has insured that thousands and probably at least ten thousand more 833 numbers got into the hands of actual end users that needed and are benefiting from them. That means thousands of businesses benefited from this. Thousands of businesses growing, advertising, expanding and *hiring*. And we haven't even gotten to the really exciting numbers yet. 17,865 of the very best 833 numbers, that were requested by multiple phone companies are still waiting to be

decided. These are the type of numbers that are going to make an even bigger difference to the businesses that get them but deciding that many numbers properly is a significant amount of work. They're going to make a big difference to the businesses that get them, IF you get them into the hands of real end users.

I believe that the FCC chose to do the 833 release differently for a reason, to help as many actual businesses as possible and keep as many of them out of the hands of industry insiders and speculators

as possible. So with this in mind I think it's time, to start the discussion on how those mutually exclusive or set aside 833 numbers should be decided. Therefore I'd like to request a period of public comment regarding the process of deciding the 833 numbers set aside during the 833 Opening.

Before we get started though, I made a cute little 2 minute video with a David Letterman style,
TOP 10 ways the FCC could decide the 833 Requests!
<https://vimeo.com/221644030>



The video script is attached as Attachment A for any visually impaired users or video impaired browsers, and in case the video hosting isn't available in the future. I realize videos aren't usually a part of FCC records but it's cute and it's the age we live in now too. It also makes a very important point, that they're not really picking which phone company to give the numbers to, they're picking which end customer to give it to. And the FCC can't decide what end customer to give it to without any customer information at all unless they don't care and just pick at random.

FCC'S GOAL: PICK THE BEST CUSTOMER FOR A # WITHOUT ANY CUSTOMER INFO?

Without additional customer input you really can't know for sure if the request is a valid request from a unique end user or not. The FCC doesn't know how important that request is to any of the end users requesting it, or why it's important, and how many requests that customer made. They don't know how much advertising that customer does, if it matches their company name, domain name or trademarks, or how many new jobs this number might generate with that customer. They don't know if it's just nice to have, whether they were just hoping to squat on it or to prevent a competitor from getting their business name, or if it's critical to their continued growth or even their survival. They don't know if that's the only number that customer requested or if they requested a thousand 833 numbers. All of these things are certainly very valid factors and can't just be ignored.



THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO WITHDRAW 833 REQUESTS



First of all there should be a way for customers through their phone company to withdraw their request. Some of our customers requested 833 numbers as long as 9 months ago, and it's taken so long that some customers have simply given up on the 833 requests, or their needs have changed. Anyone dealing with hundreds or thousands of customer requests for something that drags on for months with no end in sight is going to lose some customers along the way. If we can't withdraw some of our requests we will probably be given at least some 833 numbers for which we no longer have a need or a customer and someone else with a need and a customer for it won't get it, that should.

SOME CUSTOMERS MAY BE SPECULATORS

One of the emails I forwarded to the FCC was an example of this, a customer searching for 833-MICROSOFT, 833-VERIZON, 833-BESTBUY, 833-SAMSUNG, 833-WALMART and a dozen others, all huge companies and brand names that they couldn't possibly advertise or do anything but squat on. If they had placed the request with numbers instead of digits most phone companies would have just added them to the list. The customer was probably just figuring without any customer information the FCC might just give it out at random which unfortunately is probably true. Without customer information there would be no way to know if one of the requestors for 833-MICROSOFT, is MICROSOFT Inc. and the other(s) are all just Squatters hoping to make a few bucks holding it hostage or just to keep it away from the real Microsoft.



It takes a little extra effort to look deeper to see whether a number matches their company name, domain name or trademarks, but these are probably the most important factors. The difference between giving 833-MICROSOFT to a squatter and giving it to Microsoft Inc. is huge. Giving good numbers to valid end users with a demonstrate-able need for the number rather than squatters is the essence of what I believe the FCC wants and needs to at least make an effort to do. It's in the entire industry and country's best interest, (everyone's except the squatters and industry insiders), to properly weigh and consider the customer information if the customer is willing to provide it.

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFIT

1-800 BENEFITS

Another very important factor I believe the FCC has to consider is how many numbers a customer has requested. I believe one of the primary goals of the FCC has to be to serve and benefit as many end users as possible. And giving a number to a customer that is requesting a large quantity of numbers over a customer requesting a single number means that one less end user and one less business will grow and benefit from that good number. That's why I believe it's extremely important to give preference to customers that are requesting one or two numbers over customers requesting a large quantity of numbers.

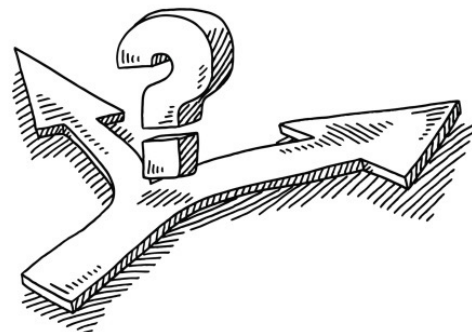


A company requesting hundreds of numbers clearly isn't going to use and benefit from each number the way a customer requesting just that one number will. The quantity of numbers a customer is requesting is one of the surest signs that it's a valid end user for that number and the best home for it. A real end user probably wouldn't request more than couple numbers, but a squatter or broker would probably request hundreds. Also if a customer is

requesting hundreds of numbers then that specific number probably isn't as crucial to them as it is to the company only requesting that one number. It's also worth pointing out that 85% of the #s with squatters, speculators, shared use companies or even service bureaus are not actively used by end users. I believe that's the core of why the FCC has to "DECIDE" these most in demand numbers.

2 POTENTIAL METHODS OF SUBMITTING CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Once you realize that you're not deciding between phone companies you're deciding between customers, the question becomes how to get that customer information. Is allowing the customers that proactively reached out to the commission enough or should you also request or require the phone company to provide more customer information? These are the two main ways the FCC could deal with and accept end customer information. The simplest solution is to just use the existing public comment system and allow customers to contact you directly. This isn't changing anything and doesn't require setting up a new system. So it seems like at least the best way to start.



Alternatively the FCC could require or request each phone company to collect and submit all of the customer information for the numbers in dispute, on a spreadsheet similar to the way they collected the list of requests. If the FCC chooses this we will of course submit a spreadsheet as well, since the steps aren't mutually exclusive. We will certainly submit a spreadsheet of all customer information if the FCC allows it, but they should still weigh and consider very strongly the customer that felt it was important enough to contact you as well.



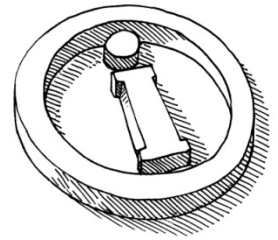
Some phone companies, especially those without many real customers, may not want to disclose customer information and may resist. However, every phone company is already *required* to have a customer in order to place a request so they could easily be required to do so. Requiring this information could also be very helpful in any future enforcement proceedings and would show that the FCC is more serious about the regulations than they may have appeared at times.

OTHER METHODS COULD BE COMBINED WITH CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Some other organizations may suggest other ways to pick which phone company should get the numbers, but that doesn't mean we can't also use the customer information, because the FCC probably can and should use *multiple* approaches. I think the customer information and requests deserve the strongest weight, but there will be some #s with multiple requests and no customer information. So the commission still needs to have a backup method, such as a lottery or anything else that anyone suggests, for #s in which no customer information was provided.

THE FCC IS PICKING THE CUSTOMER NOT THE PHONE COMPANY

In conclusion I think It's important to repeat the key point, that the commission isn't ultimately trying to determine which phone company to give it to. They're trying to determine which END CUSTOMER to give it to. That customer can transfer it from phone company to phone company so they're not picking the phone company, they're picking the *end user*. Without additional information *from the end customer* there's no good way to determine which *end customer* should receive the number.



It may seem like a lot of work to make 17,865 "decisions" but each decision isn't just a customer, it's a BUSINESS, and you're increasing the effectiveness of their advertising. It's not just these 18K numbers but a lot of the requests that weren't mutually exclusive and set aside are also benefiting businesses already. In fact I would estimate that almost half of the 56K numbers given out initially went to customers and at least 10,000 of them would translate to enough business growth to translate to two jobs over the next few years. And of the 18,000 best numbers probably another 15,000 of them, if given to real customers could result in business growth equivalent to at least two jobs, or another 30,000. So in all, I would estimate that the FCC may have generated the equivalent of 40,000 to 50,000 new jobs, if the FCC gets these 833 numbers to real end users as opposed to blindly or randomly just picking a request and hoping it works out.

The FCC has worked surprisingly hard and proven that they're trying to make the best system possible and I want to applaud them whole heartedly for this and point out on the record how much I believe this matters to small businesses. I truly believe they're doing several things here, to improve the process for all of us and hope that they take this last step to evaluate the numbers in dispute properly, using whatever customer information they receive to make the best decisions possible. This will benefit a lot of business and make a real difference. So lets start a public discussion about this and explore all the options. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Bill Quimby
President of TollFreeNumbers.com

